

WEGWAY

Nº 6 Fall 2003

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Nº6

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Front Cover

Matt Siber

Untitled #13, inkjet print, 50" x 40" (detail), 2003.

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Errata:

Chris Ballantyne's *Intersecting Gates* in Wegway 5 should have credited peres projects, Los Angeles, CA for the image.

Ron Martin's *Report 3* in the same issue should have concluded with the words, "Sofia Smith © August 14 to 29, 4081. 881 words. The Report. Report Three."

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Letters

It's a lot of work to edit and publish a magazine while holding down a full time job as a Locomotive Engineer. I'm not complaining though, because it's worth the effort. I think it's fun, and I think the contributors find it not half bad either. We will continue to publish mail art, artists' trading cards, forgotten voices, young newcomers, comics, strange texts, eccentric points of view and things intended to have no commercial potential. It is important to publish these things.

This issue contains the work selected for the Second Annual Juried Exhibition at SPIN Gallery in Toronto. The juried show is a fund-raiser for us – we couldn't afford to print Wegway without this help. Thank you to Becky Singleton and Juno Youn for their hard work as jurors and thank you to SPIN for hosting the show.

We are planning a photography show as part of the Contact Festival in Toronto next May (in the Steam Whistle Brewing Company Gallery) and there will be a Third Annual Juried Exhibition next November. You can write me for more information, or look on our website.



Agnes Denes published a piece on her Tree Mountain in issue 4. Here's an update on that: "Hi Steve, thanks for the new issue of Wegway – very nice. How are you doing? I am hanging in there; my retrospective at Bucknell University was very successful as you can see from the little essay I am sending in the attachment. You also asked me to send an image of Tree Mountain as it is, or rather was, in 2002. You could reproduce it in the magazine as a time related artwork, then and now. Look in the attachment. Best regards, Agnes"

Regarding the Wegway Second Annual International Juried Exhibition

Dear Steve,
Give our condolences to the exhibiting artists. If any of them have nervous breakdowns, inform them that we are vigilant and standing on guard to assist any and all.

Sincerely, Minister of Information AA (Artists Anonymous)

Attn: Mr Steve Armstrong;
Glancing at the Wegway booklet No.5 that you enclosed along with my returned slides, I stopped at page 56 and saw Susan Gold's Nobel Peace Project, "Fruits of America" by Reed Altemus. I understand the message the artist is trying to project: by adding the icon that implies danger or death and "Global Genocide" added to the fruits sown in U.S. soil. What I see with indignation is the title, "Fruits of America"

All of us, who come from Central and South America, see this as misleading. The title should be "Fruits of the U.S.A".

Let's suppose this art were shown in South America. I bet the well educated, and the most ignorant peasant alike, would be enraged when they see a title that would read in Spanish, "frutos de America" The general consensus would be: Where is the "mango"; "the papaya"; "the pineapple"; "the guava". etc. etc.

It is narrow-minded and self-centered to think of the U.S.A. as "America". Please, fellow artists, do not subvert and mislead the arts, even though, some-times, it is done in BONA FIDE.

Carlos Paccas

Hi Steve,
Thanks for returning the slides - and for putting the images on CD. I would love to participate in Wegway. I read much of the issue you enclosed and am really enjoying it. I find the mix completely refreshing. You embrace all aesthetics, finding a way to knit them together. Like the AA group featured (I actually laughed out loud reading it!) this lack of censoring, "we-know-better-than-you" intellectual attitude, (which just masks the real agenda of

exclusion) is something I can really warm up to. The way I understand your stance on primary culture, you make great efforts to ensure that a pluralistic voice results. I can't stress enough how necessary this is right now. (I agree that conceptualism has its place, but NOT a primacy of place, and NOT to the exclusion of all other aesthetics.) You can definitely consider me a supporter of your efforts.

Thanks again. With very best wishes, Karen Fitzgerald

Karen Fitzgerald's work has yet to appear in an issue of Wegway due to technical problems with image quality. It will happen eventually - S.A.

Dear Steve
I regret sincerely that I was unable to attend the Wegway party on June 7th, which I have no doubt was a blast. Wegway Magazine is to be highly commended for its effective promotion and awareness of art and its continual r-evolution. You have my admiration and very best wishes. Wegway offers a vital cultural tool for our city, and enables an impetus (so often felt lacking) in the continuum. Furthermore, Spin Gallery is to be praised for the meaningful roll it plays in the world of contemporary art, which in itself is a daunting, but wonderful and important challenge.

Sincerely, frankieRich, Artist

Letter forwarded to Wegway
The art and technology communities will both have something to be proud of when InterAccess releases the AID (Art Interface Device) later this year. The AID system is a microprocessor framework for electronic art installations currently being developed under a General Public Licence in conjunction with the InterAccess Electronic Media Arts Centre in Toronto.

AID, which has been in development since 1999, is a descendant of the SenseBus project, a system that used nine microprocessors together to allow art installations to sense the presence of a person in the installation. The installation itself would then respond to the change in environment (turn a light on, play a sound, etc.). AID, which will accommodate different skill levels and input/output technologies, will enable the same stimulation-response cycle as SenseBus did, but with an added dimension: it will be an open source project built

around the needs of real life artists. So far, the technology has only been tested publicly once, on an installation by Australian artist Stelarc who works regularly with robotics – in this case a prosthetic head.

Ben Bogart, an artist who worked on the Stelarc project, thinks the AID project will be successful among artists because it allows them to take advantage of its technology in a “non-commercial, open-source atmosphere.” Bogart sees AID users as “investors in their own technology,” each with “power to steer the technology to where they want it to go.”

Ian Murray

Dear Steve,

The Wegway is quite nice and I hope to be able to contribute something of mine to one of your issues. I am really a potter I spend most of my time making pots, you know mugs, vases, little bottles, ceramic masks, pitchers, bowls and plates. By the way, are you a foreigner? Well it really doesn't matter because Bertozzi made me King of all the INI in North America. I wanted to abdicate but he sent me a letter from Italy telling me in essence that once you are the Inist King of North America you are the King for life.

You must remember this Steve, its very important, OK? Because first you come to me for a favour, “Hey Paul, gimme a contribution for my magazine.” Steve I can do this thing for you, but there will come a day where I too shall need a favour and Steve, you must do this thing. It is now a matter of honour between us. Now it is the time for us to celebrate and I say to you, what a great magazine. I am enjoying it too much. I did not actually post my magazines and book yet. I'll post them tomorrow.

But enough about me, what are your dreams, your plans Steve.

God Bless,

Paul Lambert, the King of the North American INI

Paul Lambert has a contribution in this issue. S.A.

Report 4

from the serialized novel,

The Report

The Guild of

Pea Shooter Makers

On the whole, concrete evidence of the roots of The Guild of Pea Shooter Makers is at best scanty. Nevertheless, there are a few records that show how Whitfield, born in 1943, shaped the cultural and, the social conditions that lead to others taking a similar position in contrast to those who resisted peas. As such, the convention of conducting an argument through peashooter messages necessitated the creation of the Authoritative School of Pea Shooter Making and Pea Shooting Techniques. The respected and notable Pub Point held the Chair of Pea Shooting in the Department of Messages of that School. His appointment to that position was contingent upon the approval of the Council's Pea Shooter Adjudicators and, Christopher Marker underwriting the school. Point claimed to be a descendent of Whitfield. And that claim created an aura of prestige for Pub Point that was hotly debated, especially, amongst the internal factions of the two Warring parties.

The prestige Point enjoyed was based more on an oral tradition rather than concrete evidence. No matter, the population believed in the stories that have come down to us over the centuries concerning the controversial fate of Roland Whitfield. The tragic outcome of Whitfield's activities were a consequence of the radical position he assumed – it is conjectured – as a pea shooter. Moreover, Whitfield's pea shooting barrages and pea shooting publications resulted in the tragic death of a viewer. The result was that Whitfield was ostracized by his community and denied the respect of his peers. Driven out of his home Whitfield was forced

to face complete rejection by his family. Still worse, in the end, he died of starvation just outside the neutral zone of the pea producing community of Pea on the continent of Austrainia. Right or wrong, such a myth has generated sympathy Whitfield was treated unjustly.

That popular belief in the myth of Whitfield was exploited by the Authoritative School of Pea Shooter Makers and Pea Shooting Techniques. Point contended that the tradition of pea shooting was based on Whitfield's contribution, which leads to the cultural and social conditions that open the door to a new way of life. He further asserted that Whitfield sacrificed himself to a pea that carried us into the future. Point claims Whitfield represented a prefiguration of the magnificence of pea shooting. Therefore, Whitfield's example justified his pea actions. Adamant in his view, Point argues that Whitfield's example testified to the notion that the, then prevailing status quo was not in the best interest of the Warring parties or the population at large. In addition, Pub Point declared that fresh pea concepts were the means that pea shooters used to keep the Warring parties from stagnating. And peas in conflict represented the principle article of school dogma open to the public scrutiny. Peas in conflict invited the public to work through the pea shooting process itself. Such participation – it was conjectured – added to the form and definition of the significance of pea messages.

In opposition to that view, the Society of Misunderstood and Abused Viewers lodged a protest. They maintained that the only course of action was pure resistance. From the perspective of this reporter, the single-minded pursuit of resisting pea messages closed their minds to any other possibility. Having only one possibility to define their existence reduced the members of the Society to little more than automatons. As robots, they would have been impervious to any outside influence other than their masters and they suffered a loss of communion among themselves.

Notwithstanding, in contrast with those programs, the Authoritative Guild of Pea Shooters offered courses on the design of peashooters. Additionally, the Guild's communications experts demonstrated to emerging pea shooters how to get their peas across. Every conceivable effort was made to enlist the most advanced methods of peashooter making and pea shooting techniques. But, Pub Point asserted that the lone pea shooter has the advantage of a fresh vision unencumbered by crusty old perceptions. Thus, equipped with a different and more critical attitude toward anarchists, the lone pea shooter's advance in perception may, in the end, be enough to demonstrate what it takes to get peas across.

Sofia Smith © August 16 to 25, 4081. 830 Words. The Report. Report Four.

Babel of Desire



The Method

Hello Dear Sir or Madame such as may be the case, So now if it is a revealed or visionary knowledge, voices and the like such as that interposing upon the chosen method these forces intrude unwanted and uninvited into the method then what? Arf arf you say developing the first prototype of this method to apply it here today and then will we quit it tomorrow but to further take it up again later? Yes, why stop here or there but take your methods to each and in every case to be found apply it. I think not. I know I require my cook or personal batman to more effort than your method would provide but as I recall some products these two have provided perhaps they are versed in your methods and have applied your scheme to my disadvantage. But besides that, I must observe to you entirely and say with this warning from a dream concerning two signs and the oppression to be found subsequent. Beware, oh my method-ologists. You must take great care. We all must tread lightly. Now it starts to sound like a horoscope. But see to it so plainly obviously inscribed a monument then for I by the night stars or this days bright shining sun's rays will not and shall not rest such holy issue upon the dirty mound of earth whence we stand together today you and I. Can you give a reason then for all this arrayed before us in its dismal splendor and awful beauty but meaningless? Hah, it is a little ways further from where you are standing sir or madame whichever is the case and it is 2 that we should take care for and be careful of. I lay back on my lounge the threatening signal to await. It is these two unknown things I wish to alert you now of, and care thereof and oh what can it mean? Arf arf and why must I bark like a dog when I write to you my dear learned fellow or madame scholar of the method for I assure you when you say what method is this? that there is one.

With My Best Regards, Paul

Atropia

Politics has a marching way of speaking, (leading people away quietly with a soft hand of words) which has been known to lead to a chess-like way of thinking about power instead of justice, (and vice versa) which can, in certain susceptible obsessives, lead to irrational violent action. For such cases, we have developed the new drug Atropia, which immediately neutralizes all patient anxiety or stress regarding politics. Subjects experience a mild 'release-euphoria' and heightened libido. Mild doses (<25mcg.) seem to produce a 'respect-enhancement' towards authority figures, with only rare instances of abject subservience. After years of successful testing in our nation's correctional facilities, Atropia has (finally!) been approved by the fda for release to the general public.

Not recommended for citizen/patients with strong libertarian inclinations: in two cases, the libertarian-patients were improperly monitored, escaped the holding facility, and are still at large and considered extremely dangerous. (See attached genefiles and vidmemestrands.) Normal-to-deviant left-wing ideational fixations almost always suppressed for up to six hours by midrange dosage (25-40mcg). Fully effective on adolescent anarchists at 50mcg, but long-term daily prescriptions must all be approved by the Surgeon and Attorney General's offices. Rebound toxicity manifesting in extreme religiosity may set in after 50 days straight dosing. Dose attenuation, sexual denial, frequent psycho-adjustment scans, and intensive peer-group therapy seem to best ameliorate the above side-effects if the coordinating neuropsychiatrist maintains a good working relationship with the patient and any family.

Second Annual International Juried Exhibition

SPIN Gallery, August 1 - 10, 2003, 158 Bathurst Street, Toronto



Cartoon Logic

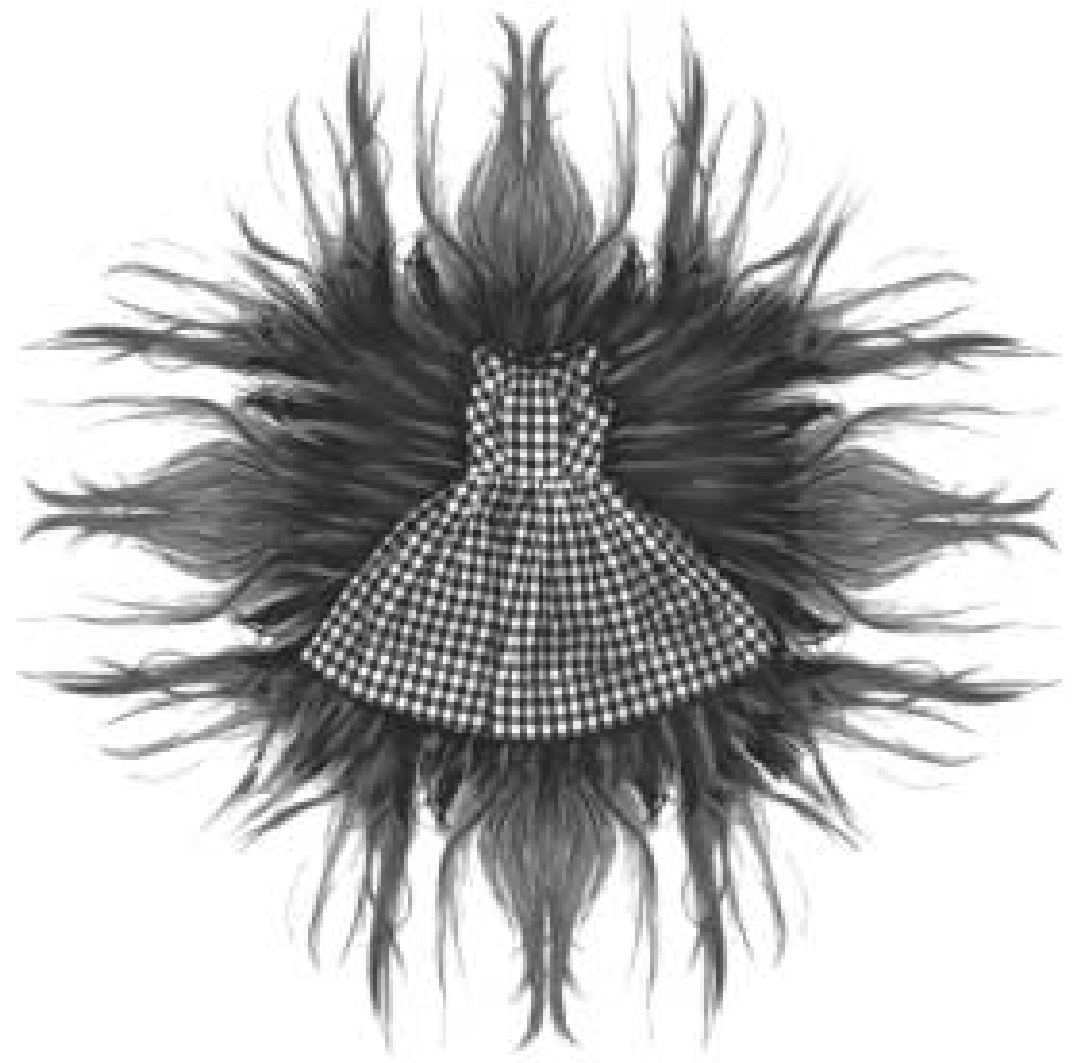
I have adopted the aesthetics, conventions and working procedures of orthodox cartoon background painting, a field I was in for several years, to create backgrounds for imaginary cartoons. Background artists employ very traditional painting and perspective techniques blended with, and simulating, the spatial and visual effects of cinema. Hence many backgrounds contain strange distortions and exaggerations of perspective – distortions that give the viewer the illusion of moving through space when the camera pans across the image. Cartoon backgrounds are inherently empty and stage-like. They are often stripped down to the barest information necessary to describe a space that will contain animated characters. This absence is interesting, not only for its formal and metaphorical implications, but because of the way it permits viewers to inhabit the space with their own imagination, to become their own cartoon characters.

Cartoons are usually produced by large teams of artists and designers and everyone involved is forced to work in the same style. Inevitably, the finished product is somewhat generic and homogenous in appearance. To maintain this quality in my own work I employ professional background designers to complete drawings from sketches I provide. I ask them to redesign the work in an established style such as that of Warner Brothers of the 1940's, or contemporary Batman. I then produce large-scale paintings from these drawings. Through this process the trace of any individual author is greatly reduced. The work comes to possess the anonymous style of art made by committee, a kind of "Corporate Realism".

Cartoon Logic,
Series "Krime Warz" Episode 1: "A settling of accounts". Scene 4, Interior day: "Police display of guns, drugs and money",
acrylic on canvas, 74" x 95", 2000. Design by Keith O'Donnell, painting by Philip Kitt.



Elizabeth Mackie,
Archival Series #7, gelatin silver print, 7.5" x 7.5", 2002



Elizabeth Mackie,
Archival Series #9, gelatin silver print, 7.5" x 7.5", 2002

Ship of Life

Interviewed by John Grande

In Demmitt, a sawmill ghost town in northern Alberta where he grew up, Peter von Tiesenhausen builds pods, ships, towers, and any number of woven willow forms on site in the landscape. Before becoming an artist he worked as a labourer, miner, roughneck, and cat-driver in the Klondike, Antarctica and the oil fields in northern Canada. He lives off the land through his art, which often explores his relation to that same land. When an oil company asked to run a pipeline through his land he refused a lucrative buy-out offer. To preserve his land for future generations, von Tiesenhausen had to claim the land as an artwork through the use of the copyright act. The oil company subsequently abandoned trying to get their pipeline to cross his land.

Lifeline (1990-) is a life long work that began with the arbitrary placing of an 8 foot section of picket fence at a point easily visible from the artist's studio. Each year an additional 8 foot section will be added to this fence structure until von Tiesenhausen's death. As the project evolves, sections will decay as others are added.

One of his most recent projects called Figure Journey involved touring a group of carved larger than life figural sculptures. The Watchers, as the five sculptures have come to be known, have traveled approximately 30-35,000 kilometres through every province and territory of Canada, and have even gone by boat through the Arctic's Northwest Passage. They have stood at the edge of the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans. The sculpture's journey

established a dialogue as people in logging towns, restaurants, gas stations, in cities or the country reacted to the figures in various ways. While that journey ended at the same point where it began nearly 5 years later in Demmitt, Alberta, The Watchers have now been cast in iron at a foundry in the city of Hamilton and will be permanently installed in front of Olympia & York's new building on Queen St. in Toronto.

JG: Peter, could you tell me what got you into making art?

PVT: I've always been painting and looking around, excited by art, and it was only at 30 that I had the opportunity to finally do that full time. I didn't know what it meant to be an artist. I thought I would give it a go anyway. I started with what I knew which was the land and landscape painting. I loved to paint and I just responded to what I saw around me.

JG: When you studied painting (1979-81) it was at the Alberta College of Art and you left there without graduating. It was 10 years later that you began your first environmental site-specific project Lifeline on a 50 acre field in northern Alberta.

PVT: That was the first thing that I did that was at all successful. It was just after working in the gold mines, and in Antarctica. I was embarking on a different life, setting to rest the previous one. I built a section of fence to mark that time, adding an 8 foot section each year for the rest of my life, never again painting or repairing the previous sections.

JG: Your first boat piece was made in Demmitt where you live and then you made another boat piece in France as a guest artist at Espace d'art contemporain near Poitiers (1995). With the second one, instead of building onto the land you dug into the clay earth recreating the outline of a ship to original dimensions. Sand was brought from the sea 100 kilometers away and filled in. The first boat piece involves drawing in space with branches, while the second is drawing or engraving into the earth. How did you come up with the concept for these works, or was there a concept?

PVT: It is a flow of ideas. You start with the idea of a ship and one thing leads to the next. Before I actually made the first piece in Demmitt I measured out the ship in the field. I walked on the snow, back and forth, pacing it by foot. Over the winter period, every time it snowed I would trample it down. I came back from traveling somewhere and during a thaw, here was this

frozen outline of snow, which was a white line on the land in the shape of a boat. It influenced the piece in France a great deal. I could draw the outline in this red earth in France but wondered how I would do it. It was summertime. So I decided to dig it into the land.

JG: How did people in France react to the image of a boat in the earth?

PvT: It is an area of France where there are a lot of Merovingian ruins. When I first flew into the area I could see traces of foundations all over the place that had been gone for a thousand years. Everywhere you went, driving through the villages, there were these water troughs that were actually coffins, sarcophagi that people were using to water their cattle. The history there is fantastic. So I thought why not leave a trace in the land that is not harmful. I would make this trench below the ploughline so that it would always be there in some form. As the field gets worked it will remain. when I began work there people were quite negative. They thought I was some kind of art star who was going to do something that would attempt to change their way of thinking. I had no intention of changing what they did on that land or of altering the land. I was just going to create this work in the land. Then people could go back and while farming it reflect on what is below the surface.

JG: This interaction with the public is often part of your work. It justifies a public reaction because you integrate a human element in environmental art and it's something that is not so common. An example is your Forest Figures, which have since become known as The Watchers, which you toured across Canada. They stimulated a reaction from ordinary people wherever you brought them...

PvT: Yes they do and I don't think I would use the term touring. I would use the term driving around because I am interested in the whole idea of being inclusive rather than exclusive. What I do can be done by anybody. There have been instances where people have been included in ways they don't necessarily want to be included. A guy in front of a coffee shop was looking over to the side at The Watchers when he should have been looking ahead and it totalled his truck. The way I see the Forest Figures is like a huge drawing, drawing a line across the whole country. Little bits of charcoal fall off the figures; large chunks of rust are continually dropping off the truck. People take souvenirs of rust off the truck, get into the truck and have their pictures taken when it's parked in the street somewhere. It's often traveling at 60 miles per hour. Just imagine sitting at a stoplight watching this thing go by.

You just get a glimpse. And that too is a drawing. It somehow gets imbedded in the mind of the viewer in a way that's much more immediate than going to a gallery to look at art. Just as the rust bleeds into the snow or into the road overtime spreading this little seed of seeing, these figures (you can't ignore them) imbed themselves into people's minds and maybe that bleeds and feeds into the other things they think about. I have had other people say that they've seen these things 500 miles from where I meet them. They say "I saw it in Regina. Were you in Regina?" Its interesting to be inclusive without preaching. When people ask what it is about, I ask "What is it about for you?" and then they tell you.

JG: So The Watchers stimulate stories?

PvT: Constantly. With gas station attendants you never talk about the price of gas or the weather anymore, you talk about what's worth doing. You talk about their father that died, or the kids that they love, the job that they would like to have, or whatever. That's really meaningful stuff for a 3-minute conversation.

JG: After the boats you did the woven willow pods up in the trees, and huts on the land, and the Maelstrom funnel at the Richmond Art Gallery in British Columbia. These works are a continuation of the boats and again they reflect the human presence in nature. Does this relate to your own rural roots in Alberta that you bring the human into outdoor work and don't set nature aside as a pristine place. You don't differentiate between people and the landscape. People are reflected in the landscape.

PvT: First of all I don't consider myself a nature artist. It's just that I am surrounded by the land. I don't think we need more stuff in the landscape. We've got enough. I am conscious of my mark on the land and try to leave as little of a mark as possible because I really love what I see. I understand my humanity and need to be connected to the land.

JG: Maybe we have lost some of the instinct or knowledge that was part of our ancestor's experience.

PvT: We are totally removed from the land, out of touch with what is actually happening. We have lost our sense of being part of the whole thing.

JG: A way of building a dynamism into sculpture is with environmental sculpture outdoors, building and creating with the context in mind, by responding to the particularity of a site. The Squamish tribe in British Columbia, for example, put a Cedar Woman figure sculpture in their traditional lands in the upper Elaho Valley, amid first growth forest where few people actually go.

PvT: I have got sculptures built out in the land that nobody has ever seen. That's not to say they are my weakest things either. They are often stronger works. I have shown them in photographs. Why was it so important to drive out to the east coast with the Forest Figures? Because somehow it embraced all the potentials that I can possibly embrace. It's like this quest for this thing that I don't know and I don't have any end result in mind. I had this concrete idea that I would send the figures out to sea on a boat made of ice. But that was abandoned after this horrible tragedy at Pouch Cove where three teenagers drowned in the icy water. So I had to rethink the whole thing. I have to be completely open and sensitive to whatever presents itself, be in tune to what is happening around me at any point in time. If the people that are clear cutting around where I live actually went outside a few times a year and walked through those forests before they clear-cut them, they couldn't possibly bring themselves to do it. Usually they're focussing on some kind of entertainment, usually television, and can just say "Yeah. Take the trees. They're worth \$40,000." Everywhere you go is an important site. This year, I was asked to do this TV interview and talk about my connection to the land. I was thinking to myself "Well what the hell do I know?" A day before they arrived, I went down into the muskeg, and lay down on a piece of moss in an area where I never go. It is kind of a mundane area so I gave myself a half an hour to lie there and look up at the sky thinking maybe some thoughts would come to me. After half an hour of lying there I was noticing all kinds of things that I never knew existed in that place! I was so exhilarated that all kinds of thoughts came to me and I wasn't doing anything. It was a kind of healing. We need to take the time to sense and feel what is there so we don't destroy it. A guy who is sitting in a feller buncher cutting down 2,500 trees a day listening to his disc man is no longer conscious of what he is doing.

JG: Maybe sensory deprivation is part of a formula for environmental destruction...

PvT: You remove yourself from it. I myself have done it. I have run heavy equipment and cut down more trees than most people in the world have done.

JG: Do you like to leave the forms you make partially incomplete to let the materials speak for themselves? Do materials have a voice?

PvT: Absolutely. My marks are all about superficiality. They are my idiosyncrasies or skills showing up. My sculpture is not about technique. It is about spirit. If you bring the spirit of the idea of those Forest Figures for example, which are crudely carved, the fire begins to bring back what is intrinsic to that wood. The charred nature of that wood brings back its own texture. It is just a rough idea, an approximation of what you want. I believe that's more honest than being intricate.

JG: Isn't that a very contemporary idea, or state of mind, to think of art making as a sketch? In classic times people sought the perfect form, proportion and everything. It is very much related to media culture and our current state of mind that even a sketch or an approximation is hard work.

PvT: When I look at a tree I think a tree is never wrong. A tree is always right. Why is that? Even a rotted off stump is still beautiful. Why is that? Even an old log cabin made of wood that's rotted and lying there is very interesting. It becomes more interesting the more nature takes it back. The rest is all pretension. I find that there is nothing that engages me more than going for a walk in the woods. Just being anywhere, actually just being alive, pulsing with that vivid magic that we have here.

JG: Your art is an expression of your experience and growth, of where you have lived. Isn't what you are doing an expression of your identity?

PvT: Perhaps. The other aspect of that is I have learned to recognize what is beautiful for me. It's that recognition I am always looking for. A lot of it is just kicking it around until I recognize it is beautiful. Then I take that thing that I believe is beautiful and I do something with it. I put it in a gallery, cast it in bronze or drive across Canada with it, or burn it or take a photograph of it. Photographs present this flow of ideas to other people - a documentation of the trail.

JG: At the Art Gallery of Southern Alberta in Lethbridge you recently created a work called Deluge (2000) that was completely different, a kind of visual maze or optical illusion.

People could not immediately see what the suspended branch forms represented. It was only in walking through the gallery, in a sense interpreting the work visually in the whole environment, its form became evident. How did you conceive this piece, its effect?

PvT: It came to me after the piece I planned initially became impossible. I was walking through the wilderness area near Lethbridge with my nephew Michael when he observed how the trees formed an arch where they came together. I noticed in that arch that when I moved to a certain point two other branches formed a cross in the arch. I realized that the drawing only formed itself from one perspective. That enlightenment led to the piece *Deluge*, *Constellation* and three-dimensional drawings.

JG: A lot of art these days has lost any sense of history or continuity. Maybe it's because we have lost touch with our storytelling or narrative traditions. This need not be religious. It can just be a verbal thing.

PvT: We are so used to being entertained as a culture. Everything is didacticized to the point that you just don't want to look at it anymore. I just built a little 10 x 14 foot long cabin as a refuge – to focus. The most recent project I have been doing involves a quarter section of 160 acres I bought this past summer. There is an abandoned apiary on this and in one of these buildings I found the plywood bases for the beehives – 190 of them. I have made them into individual paintings with a chainsaw and an axe carving the image of a fire in low relief. They have wax and traces of the bees on the back, and charred wood on the front. I will be presenting them on a wall in a grid pattern. I have also had each digitally photographed and edited. The plain images will follow each other. They become the individual frames of a film. A film with these images will be projected on one side for exhibition and this wall of fire will be on the other side. The thing that I really like about this particular project is it is part of a film. Each one of those pieces will potentially go off into a private collection. I will use the money that comes from this to purchase a new piece of land for conservation purposes. Then I will find what is there to make art out of. The process continues...

JG: One of the few permanent pieces you have made is for the City of Calgary Centennial at the waterworks. Can you tell me about it?

PvT: I did this piece out of white Vermont granite. It is 27 feet long, 5 feet high, and weighs 60,000 lbs. It is sited in a very beautiful place overlooking the Glenmore Reservoir in front of the waterworks filtration building. It is a piece that talks about time. Originally I thought of making it out of marble, but marble doesn't last as long, so I decided on white granite. If you go inside the white granite, it becomes a calming, meditative space. I like it now, but it is still too full of my marks. Too new. It's very much about time and in 10,000 years it will be remarkable, possibly even a sacred place.

JG: It seems to refer to a journey like so many of your sculptures, one that is both an inner one and that involves the real life. It's a ship of life.

- John K. Grande

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The Watchers on an ice road